

LARGE AND DIGNIFIED

Washington March Turns Into Civil Rights Festival

BY CHARLES PORTIS

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Somewhere along the way, the march on Washington became the march in Washington.

The idea was to mobilize 100,000 Negroes, mostly unemployed ones, for a dramatic, super-Birmingham demonstration at the White House and the Capitol.

They would march down Pennsylvania Ave. singing, chanting slogans and waving placards. Perhaps they could inveigle the President to address them, or at least get Bobby Kennedy to confront them again in the streets with his bullhorn. In the House and Senate there would be sit-ins, with Sen. Eastland stepping over supine bodies to get into his office. Some of the blood-and-thunder marchers even suggested lying down in the streets and on the runways of the airports.

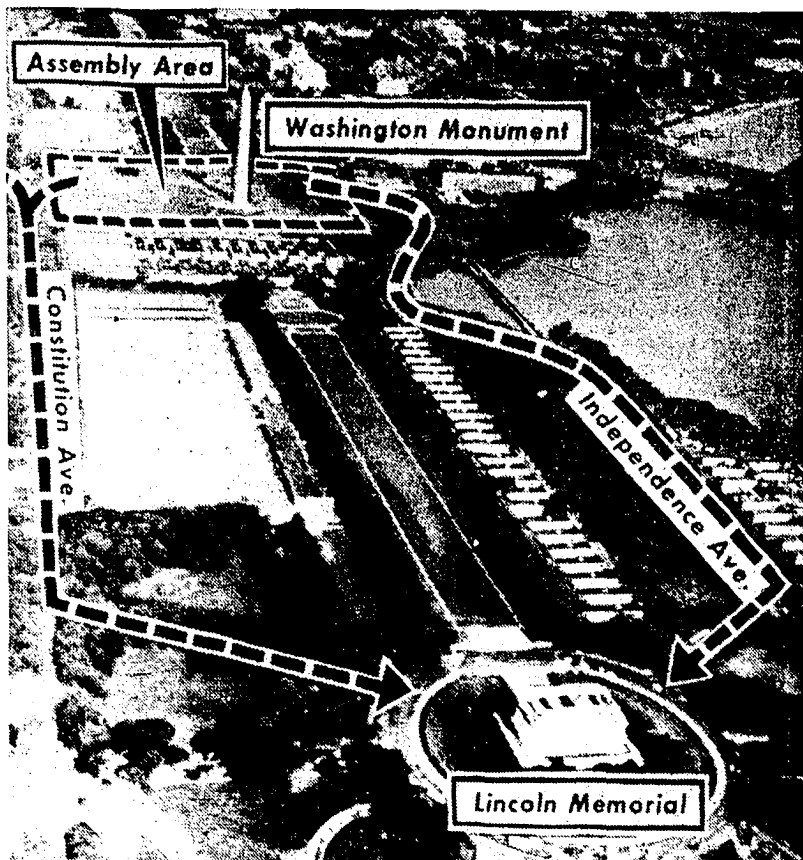
Spectacular Climax

It would be a spectacular summer climax to the Negro revolt of 1963, a sort of summing-up of all the demonstrations everywhere.

Then, as the plans were being laid, more and more people got into the act—politicians, labor leaders, clergymen, movie stars. Organizational problems developed, problems of logistics, of control. The tone changed.

Last week, when the master plan emerged, the rowdy aspects of the thing had disappeared and the big march had evolved into a civil rights festival, a jamboree on the Mall with box lunches.

Debbie Reynolds will be there Wednesday, with the Negro unemployed, and Mayor Robert Wagner and Malcolm X, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, the Ladies Garment Workers Union, Roy Wilkins, Marlon Brando, the New York Assn. of Elks, and



ROUTE OF MARCH.—Broken lines locate assembly area and route of Washington march for civil rights. It will form at the Washington Monument and travel down Constitution and Independence Aves. to rally at Lincoln Memorial.

UPI Wirephoto

a man from Chicago named Ledger Smith, who is said to be roller skating to Washington.

All told, some 200,000 people are expected to take part in the march, which will make it the largest protest demonstration ever held in Washington. In numbers, it will put Coxey's Army and the bonus marchers in the shade.

Here is what they will do: Assemble at 10 a.m. Wednesday on the Mall around the Washington Monument.

There they will be entertained by Miss Reynolds, Brando and a hundred or so Hollywood people who are coming from California by chartered plane. At noon, the gathering will split into two groups for the "solemn march" down Constitution and Independence Aves. to the Lincoln Memorial, about a mile away. Along the way they will sing "We Shall Overcome." The rally proper is to begin at 2 p.m. at the memorial—speeches and singing. After a couple of

hours of that, the show is over, or is supposed to be.

A delegation of 10 leaders of the march will call on the President at the White House at 5 p.m. and report back to the rally, but no one else is authorized to appear—as a plaintiff—at either the White House or the Capitol.

Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph, the masterminds of the march, have called repeatedly for peaceful conduct and have gone to great lengths to head off

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Capital March Will Be Civil Rights Festival

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trouble. They have assigned 2,000 "marshals" to the march, young men who will mingle with the crowd to calm down the hotheads. Among them will be some real professionals — the Guardians, a Negro organization of off-duty New York policemen.

After examining these bona fides the Washington Police Department and the U.S. Park Police promised their full co-operation. They will keep in touch with the marshals, who have no police authority, by walkie-talkie.

Even the President has expressed his approval.

"I'll look forward to being here," he said. "I'm sure members of Congress will be here. We want citizens to come to Congress if they feel they're not having their rights expressed."

Riot Threatened

Still, the specter of riot hangs over the march. Some 200,000 angry people in one place on a hot day in August makes for a combustible situation. Throw in Malcolm X, the Black Muslim leader who has been gleefully predicting violence for months from his Harlem soapbox, and Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell, who is trying to rally a master race counter-march for Wednesday, and things look bad indeed.

The leaders say they expect no trouble at all.

The point of it all, of course, is to bring pressure on Congress to pass President Kennedy's sweeping civil rights bill, and generally to call attention to the plight of the American Negro.

"We hope to accomplish two things by the march," Rustin said. "To prick the conscience of the nation to the fact that 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, Negroes are still not

free. And to show the terrifically bad economic situation under which Negroes are living today."

Rustin, 63, who is deputy director of the march on Washington for jobs and freedom, has a rather checkered past. A former member of the Young Communist League, he sat out World War II in jail as a conscientious objector, and has been convicted on a vice charge.

Impressive Organizer

For all that he is an impressive organizer, and he has the trust and confidence of such men as Randolph and Dr. Martin Luther King. Rustin conceived the idea of the march last winter, and after thinking it over for a few days, he suggested it to Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

He took to it at once. In fact, Randolph had thought of it before—he proposed such a march as early as 1941. It was still a good idea, he said, and they went to work.

By July, Randolph's considerable influence and Rustin's organizational savvy had brought around every major Negro group in the country, and got them to pull together for once.

Joint Announcement

On July 2, they made a joint announcement of the march — Randolph; Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People; James Farmer, national director of the Congress for Racial Equality; the Rev. King, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Whitney Young, executive director of the National Urban League, and John Lewis, chairman of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

To avoid dispute, all six were named co-chairmen of the event.